

BAP
P119c

Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No.

SCB
10219

⁶¹⁴
Moses Fishers

Book

1808

Thomas

Doors

London

James & Thoms

July 2 1808

July 2 1861



THE
CHRISTIAN'S MANUAL;

CONTAINING

Some Thoughts on the following Subjects, viz.

- I.—ON the ARTICLES of the CHRISTIAN FAITH,
with a concise Form of the Covenant annexed.
- II.—ON BAPTISM. A Dialogue.
- III.—ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.
- IV.—ON PRAYER, with some Forms.
- V.—ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT, by Question and
Answer.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A part of a celebrated SERMON, on the
neglect of Public Worship.

The whole Designed for the Use of Families.

BY HEZEKIAH PACKARD, A. M.

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

Published according to Act of Congress.


Printed by SAMUEL PRESTON, AMHERST, N. H.
MARCH—1801.

THE HISTORY OF THE

PROVINCE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
IN TWO VOLUMES
BY JOHN CLARKE
OF THE BAR AT NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLISHED BY J. CLARKE
AT NEW HAMPSHIRE
1791

Printed by J. CLARKE
AT NEW HAMPSHIRE

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE writer of these sheets can assure the public, that, in preparing them for the press, he has taken the advice of the most approved Authors, with whom he has had any considerable acquaintance. He has found the business of collecting materials for the following work no solitary employment. For he has attended with pleasure to the friendly and valuable instructions of Mr. Grove and Mr. Bell on the Lord's Supper, and has had occasional interviews with others, who have directed their thoughts to the same point. Mr. Towgood, who highly adorned his profession, in company with several others of no small repute, has afforded him much assistance, in carrying on a dialogue with a respectable Parishioner, on the subject of Baptism. Indeed, the writer has already such a respectable number of patrons, who still live in their writings, that he now submits this small volume to the public, with encouraging hopes of its being useful. And hereby he trusts he shall contribute something to the best interests of his fellow-citizens.

P R E F A C E.

To the Serious and Inquisitive Reader.

DEAR FRIEND,

*I*N the following work, you will not find much of the severity and edgèdness of party. You will soon perceive, that it is the Author's design to assist and encourage your inquiries, and to render you more religious. While he endeavors to rouse the attention of the inconsiderate, and to strengthen the true believer, he has an ardent desire to administer comfort and support to the feeble minded, and to aid your pursuit after The One Thing needful. He hopes you will persevere in your momentous inquiries, and he prays God to work in you the work of faith with power. Let no opportunity escape your notice, nor pass unimproved. Short, at longest, is the day of life and of grace. A state of retribution awaits us. Our future condition will be the fair result of our moral characters in this world. So that we are acting for eternity. How solemn and affecting the thought ! Oh ! that men were wise, that they understood this, and would consider of their latter end !

Chelmsford, Jan. 1801.

PART I.

CONTAINING

A few Thoughts on the Gospel Covenant,

TOGETHER

*With a Form of it, as adopted by the Church of Christ,
in Chelmsford.*

“Be not rash with thy mouth and let not thine heart be hasty
to utter any thing before God. For God is in heaven and
thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few. Eccl. v. 2.

ON THE ARTICLES OF THE

CHRISTIAN COVENANT.

OUR system of faith and the terms of admission into the Church should be so constructed and adapted, as to meet the acceptance of every unprejudiced and sincere christian. Confessions of faith have had attached to them so many sharp points, that numbers have been afraid to approach the table of our common Lord. Some persons of good characters and visible piety have lived and died without the pale of the church, because they could not in conscience subscribe to the articles of faith presented them, nor comply with the required forms of admission. It is certainly matter of painful lamentation, that any proper and accepted

members of Christ's spiritual kingdom should be denied the privilege and benefits of his visible church on earth. By requiring too much we frustrate our own designs, and tempt persons to handle the word and ordinances of the Lord deceitfully. When we consider that christians of the greatest and those of the smallest attainments, have the same God and Father to worship and adore ; the same Lord and Master to serve and obey ; the same glorious inheritance in prospect ; we are constrained to be candid and mild. Arguments in favor of measures charitable and conciliatory rush in from every quarter. For after urging and fixing ever so many points, the *main point* is to have the heart right in the sight of God. After all our forms and confessions, the *grand requisite* is to have a temper and disposition for a life of holiness and virtue. Hence, to reduce our forms of the Christian Covenant, and our terms of communion to the mild standard of the gospel, is matter of great importance. To see the distinctions of sect and party laid aside, and all malice, revenge and bitterness done away, is truly desirable. And it becomes all the rightful members of Christ's family and kingdom to unite their exertions in the common cause of their common Lord and Master, and promote peace and good will among men. Wishing to contribute something to aid such a valuable design, and assist the in-

quiries of private christians and all well disposed pupils in the school of Christ, I here subjoin a concise form of the Christian Covenant, adopted by the Church of Christ in Chelmsford and administered to all who are admitted.

THE COVENANT.

“YOU do now, in the presence of Almighty God and before this christian assembly, profess a sincere belief in the existence, providence and government of Jehovah, who is infinitely wise, just and good, and who searches the hearts and regards the actions of men. You believe that to love and obey him is our most reasonable service, and conducive to our highest interests. You believe in man’s primeval innocence, voluntary transgression, and unhappy fall. You believe in the doctrines of divine revelation, which is graciously designed for our instruction, recovery and eternal happiness. You believe that God spake to our Father’s by the Prophets, and that in these last days, He speaks to us in the Gospel of his Son, who is the one Mediator between God and man, and the only true way to eternal life. You do humbly and penitently confess your sins of every name and nature, and devoutly implore the benefits of the Spirit’s guidance, the Son’s

sacrifice, and the Father's mercy. You do ardently desire to give up yourself to God, and resolve to deny all ungodliness and live as the Gospel teaches. You commit yourself to the care and discipline of this christian church, and promise to walk in communion with us as long as God in his providence shall give you opportunity. *Thus you believe, thus you resolve, thus you promise.*

You are then under the solemn bonds of the Covenant, and in the name of this christian church I declare you a member of it in full communion. In the name of the church I also promise, that we will watch over you in the spirit of meekness and charity, and endeavor to promote your present and future welfare. And may grace, mercy and peace be multiplied to you and us through the blood of the everlasting Covenant."

AMEN.

This form of the Covenant comprises, in the Author's opinion, the essentials of the christian religion. All matters of faith and practice may be fairly reduced to what is here stated and required. Those points on which so many volumes have been written, and on which polemic Divines may never agree to fix, do not determine the state of the heart, nor mark the degrees of grace. The

best creed may be subscribed and vindicated by a bad man, while a man of real piety may have doubts and fears resting upon his mind. Some who have readily set their names to lengthy and particular confessions of faith, may belong to the number of hypocrites and unbelievers. And some, who have been restrained by conscience from such confessions, may hold a distinguished place in the church and assembly of the first born in heaven. Before our own Master we must stand or fall. It becomes us, therefore, to inquire and judge for ourselves. With this view, let us search the scriptures to know God's will and human duty, and examine our own hearts to know ourselves. Let us take heed that we build our opinions, our characters and hopes upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the CHIEF CORNER STONE.



P A R T II.
ON BAPTISM,

IN

A Dialogue between a Minister and a respectable Parishioner, supposed to be at the Minister's house.



DIALOGUE.

Parishioner. I HAVE come, Sir, to converse with you on some subjects, which have long laid upon my mind with great weight. I know your readiness to impart all the light and instruction you can to your people, and I am sensible I need both.

Minister. I wish to do what good I can, and shall be happy to render you all the service in my power. What are the subjects which labor in your mind?

P. I have neglected to profess the christian faith, and to dedicate my children in baptism. I feel uneasy. Matters of a religious nature have employed much of my attention for several years past, and I have endeavored to discover my own character and duty. I now think it incumbent on me to profess Christ before men. But I am in doubt with respect to the proper subjects and mode of baptism, and wish for your sentiments. My parents gave me up to God in

baptism, when I was in infancy, and I have a desire to do what is proper for my children. But I cannot act for them in this case, without a sufficient warrant for it. Christianity addresses itself to our reason and understanding; but the scriptures are not so clear and full on these points, as to remove doubts and difficulties from my mind.

M. I have paid some attention to the subjects of your inquiry, and will now submit to your consideration some of my ideas.

We all allow, that baptism is a divine institution, and is appointed as a standing ordinance for the regular admission of persons into Christ's visible kingdom. It is the appropriate seal of the Gospel Covenant, and denotes the necessity of divine power and influence to renew and govern our hearts. It signifies the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, it signifies much the same that circumcision signified under former dispensations. The Apostle, you know, says, that he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter.

P. I perceive, that in their general design and import, baptism well agrees with circumcision, but I will hear you farther.

M. The visible church of God, as to its foundation and leading principles, has always been the same. In every period and under every dispensation, the church has rested upon the Covenant of grace. This Covenant was in part opened to Adam, Enoch and Noah, and all the pious patriarchs. To Abraham, in particular, it was more fully made known in that memorable Covenant, of which circumcision was the appointed token and seal. The Abrahamic Covenant, founded in God's grace and compassion towards a sinful and idolatrous world, was imitated in its principal features and design by the Mosaic dispensation, which was expressly added, "*because of transgression.*" To keep the unstable Israelites from the worship of Idols, and to spread the knowledge of God and religion, the Lord spake to Moses from the burning bush; Sinai was made to tremble; the people of Israel received statutes and judgments for their admonition and guidance. The promise made to Abraham was of faith, that it might be by grace. The law was a well qualified school-master to bring men to Christ. In this connexion, we ought to remember the instructions of the Apostle, that, *if we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise*; and that *on two commandments*, which naturally rise from the Covenant of grace and are always binding, *hang all the law and the prophets*. This being the case,

and we living under a dispensation, to which all former ones ultimately referred, we cannot suppose, that children are now excluded from those privileges and blessings, to which infants were formerly admitted. Are not the children of believers now, as capable of signal and distinguishing favors, as were infants of eight days old in the time of Abraham and Moses ? Did any earlier forms of God's Covenant with fallen man embrace our infant offspring more tenderly and more effectually, than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ? Infants were formerly admitted into Covenant and had its seal stamped upon them. They had given them an express token and pledge, that Jehovah would be their God. They were considered as standing in a peculiar relation to the great Head of the church, and were accounted his children. This was justly esteemed a great and precious privilege. We have no account in the sacred scriptures, that this privilege has ever been taken away, and this relation renounced. Our authority for withholding a privilege must be as great as that upon which it was at first granted. The children of believers are born into the arms of the Covenant. And hence we may fairly conclude, that the infants of believers, or any under their care, retain a right to this ancient, unrepealed privilege, and ought to be admitted

into Covenant. And baptism being now, as was circumcision, the seal of the Covenant, and being, like that, the mode of initiation into the church, they ought to be baptized. Baptism signifying what circumcision signified, it well supplies its place. I conceive it, therefore, to be your duty, on professing christianity, to give up your children in this ordinance to the protection, guidance and blessing of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*.

P. Your observations appear to be founded upon scripture authorities, and the subject strikes me in a light somewhat different from what it ever did before. But so many things have been said on both sides of the question, I still feel at a loss with regard to the *mode* of baptism. Sometimes I have thought I ought to be *plunged*, in order for regular admission into the church. Your practice shews what your sentiments are, but I should be glad to know the reasons and grounds of your opinion.

M. I do not find any examples on either side of the question to determine the point. But there are several reasons, which have satisfied and confirmed me in my practice. This *seal* of the Covenant may indicate the *spiritual contents* which lie under it. This expressive *sign* may serve to represent the things *signified*. In which case, the common and special workings of God's spirit upon the minds

of men are set forth. It is true, we have no adequate ideas of the manner, in which the holy Spirit opens and enlarges, inspires and directs the human mind. But there are some passages of scripture, which seem to be designed to point out something of the mode of the Spirit's operation. We know how rain falls upon the mown grass ; how showers descend, which water the earth ; how the gentle dew drop softly lights upon the tender herb ; how things are sprinkled with clean water. And these are the ways in which the operations of God's Spirit are represented in the volume of inspiration.

I know it is said, that believers are buried with Christ by baptism. The same idea is expressed in several places in the New Testament. And I acknowledge, that at first view such expressions favor the practice of *plunging*. But what is the real meaning and intent of these parts of scripture. They cannot mean, that Christ is really in the water, while any person is receiving baptism. They cannot denote the mode of Christ's baptism, and at the same time furnish an example to christians, because our Lord conformed to John's baptism, which was in several respects different from the christian. They cannot represent the manner of Christ's death, because he died upon the cross erected upon mount Calvary. I wish you would read, with the greatest care and attention, the

vi. chap. of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and the ii. chap. of his Epistle to the Col. Endeavor to ascertain the whole meaning of what is said on the subject. And when you find, that, *by baptism*, believers are *buried* with Christ, are *crucified* with Christ, are *risen* with Christ, you must, I think, be convinced that such passages do not represent any particular *mode* of baptism, but refer to the things *signified* by it. The matter seems to be in some measure explained, in the iii. chap. of the first general Epistle of Peter. We are there told that in Noah's ark eight souls were saved by water. "*The like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" God used the waters of the flood not only to punish and drown the old world, when overwhelmed in its iniquities; but he used them to support and carry the ark, for the preservation of Noah and his family. In this view, Noah and his family were saved by water. They fled from a world "*all perishing in sin*" into the ark of safety provided for them, and rode upon the waters of the flood. In like manner, by baptism, we renounce all communication with the unfruitful works of darkness, and fly for refuge to the ark of the Covenant provided in the Gospel. The Gospel Covenant is to believers what the ark was to Noah and his family:

The inference, from the portions of the scripture cited and referred to, seems to me very plain and obvious. As Christ died *for* sin, believers die *to* sin. As Christ died and rose again, so we are directed to die to sin and rise to newness of life. As Christ was crucified, so they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. As Noah and his family were preserved from the deluge by repairing to the ark according to the divine command; so christians are preserved from the just consequences of sin, by taking refuge in the ark of the Gospel Covenant and complying with its conditions. To be buried with Christ by or in baptism, into or unto his death, is to receive and cherish those instructions, truths and influences set forth and granted in that Covenant, of which baptism is the seal and pledge. We lay aside our weapons of rebellion, and become willing subjects of the king of saints. We *bury* the whole body of sin, and rise to newness of life. All this does not determine the mode of baptism.

P. But do you not think, that many serious and good people have put a different construction on the passages, which you have now explained?

M. I do. I have no doubt, that many individuals and even some churches have considered the authority such passages furnish for *plunging* amply sufficient.

P. I remember you hinted at some difference between John's baptism and christian baptism, and I would thank you to point it out.

M. The requisite of John's baptism was repentance. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. "*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" The requisite of christian baptism is an influential belief of the whole christian religion. John's disciples believed in the promised Messiah. Christ's disciples believed that Jesus was the Christ. John's baptism was not attended with the particular effusions of God's Spirit ; but he gave assurances, that one was soon to come, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. John's baptism was preparatory to the christian. John himself was the bright morning star announcing the approach of the sun of righteousness.

P. There are several instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament, which are supposed to authorize the practice of immersion. I wish for your ideas concerning them.

M. Do you refer to Lydia and her household, or to the jailor and his, or to Cornelius and those at his house, or to the case of Philip and the Eunuch ?

P. I had some of these in mind, and I should like to hear your sentiments on each of them.

M. If we had never heard any dispute about the matter, and were to judge merely from what is written of Lydia and her family, we should readily conclude, that she and all under her immediate care, whether children or not, were baptized on account of her faith in Christ. We should not be likely to form any decisive opinion of the mode and place of baptism. Attending on the preached word near the side of a river, it was there she believed. And to preach there was no more than the dictate of common prudence, considering the heat and barrenness of that country, and the multitudes and thirst of the people, who were often present on such occasions.

When the two Apostles, Paul and Silas, spake to the jailor the word of the Lord, and plainly told him what he must do to be saved, the jailor took them and washed the stripes they had unjustly received, and was baptized, he and his, straightway. I think it hardly probable, that they all went to a river, or pond; or that there was any convenient place for the purpose in the prison. It must be matter of considerable hazard for the jailor and his family to be at a distance from the prison, and in the middle of the night, with persons, whose escape might prove fatal to him. And we cannot suppose, that there were accommodations within the confines of the jail. For though such a dreaded mansion is commonly furnished with chains and

stocks for *convicts* ; yet we do not expect to find pools and fountains for baptizing *converts*. We are told, notwithstanding, that the jailor and his family were baptized *at the same hour of the night*.

With respect to Cornelius and those at his house, Peter said, "*Can any man forbid water that these should be baptized ?*" Did he mean to ask, whether any man could be so unkind and cruel as to stop the river from flowing, or prevent access to the common fountains and ponds in the neighborhood ? Or did he mean to suggest, that water should be brought for the occasion, and they baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus ?

I know it is written, that both Philip and the Eunuch went down *into* the water and came up *out of* the water. Do you suppose, that the *baptizer* was as much under water as the *baptized* ? If not, how could they alike go down *into* the water and alike come up *out of* the water ? Besides, it is urged on good authority, that the river, where the Eunuch is said to have been baptized, was not deep enough for immersion. The truth is, the words rendered *into* and *out of* might with equal propriety be translated *to* and *from*, and they must go down *to* the water and come up *from* it, in order to have baptism administered according to either mode.

Thus I have concisely given you some of my ideas of the instances of baptism above

mentioned. I do not, however, consider them as examples on either side ; but some of them were attended with such circumstances of time and place, as to render the practice of sprinkling at least probable.

P. You mention the *practice* of sprinkling, which leads me to ask, what appears to have been the prevailing practice of the church since the days of the Apostles.

M. The general current of Ecclesiastical history bears increasing testimony, that the baptism of infants has been the prevailing practice of the christian church from the days of the Apostles down to our own times. And I believe, that some christians and churches, who were in the practice of immersion, have allowed that infants are the proper subjects of baptism, and in that way have received them into the arms of the church. A council of sixty-six bishops was formed in the year of our Lord 253. The grand question before them was not, whether infants should receive baptism, but whether baptism might be administered to them before they were eight days old, according to the law of circumcision ? The result of council was unanimous, "*that the baptism of infants was not to be deferred till the eighth day.*" I could fill pages with respectable authorities, drawn from history, to prove, that the same practice has been continued from age to age. But you may think I have already said too much, and I forbear.

P. I have heard you with pleasure, and I hope I shall make a good improvement of your conversation.

M. You advanced one idea, sometime ago, which I think it my duty to notice. You mentioned, that, though you were baptized in infancy, you have had thoughts of being *plunged* in order to admission into the church. We are not to trifle with such things. You have received baptism according to the opinions and practices of churches regularly formed, disciplined and taught. Your name is enrolled with the members of Christ's visible kingdom, and the ordinance was administered before the church by one duly authorized, and in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*. If there be an error, which, however, I do not believe, it is not yours. It belongs to the church, which authorized, and to the Pastor, who administered the baptism. To be *rebaptized* brings reproach and contempt upon the christian profession, and offers an indignity to the tremendous name, into which you were baptized. I should as readily baptize in one way as the other, but I could not consistently baptize any person, who had been baptized before. To baptize infants or adult persons by immersion at an inclement season, or in a weak and sickly state, seems to be hazardous. Excepting these circumstances of difference,

I should have no objection to baptize by plunging any proper subjects.

P. I rejoice to find that you have so much candour and charity, I wish, for my part, the baptists had more charity for their fellow christians. That matter of close communion I never could understand.

M. There are many serious, good people among the baptists, and I respect the denomination. I have been treated by them with great civility, and some of my family connexions have been of their persuasion. Some of their most respectable Clergymen have given up the idea of close communion, and are recommending the mantle of charity to others.

P. But what has commonly been the root and origin of baptist societies? Have they generally risen at the time of the outpourings of God's Spirit; and in seasons of general awakening and reformation? Or have they commonly started up in consequence of disputes, quarrels and contentions?

M. These questions I acknowledge are of some weight, but they are not more important than this question, Are they not in the character of baptists, as regular and religious, as christians of any other denomination?

P. There are some of them who do no honor to the christian profession. If immersion had a tendency to cleanse persons from moral pollution, it would be necessary to dip

Some of them a number of times before they would be clean and pure.

M. It is so with some of every denomination. How many of our fellow christians are influenced chiefly by their passions, and by considerations of wordly interest !

P. I do not wish to enlarge, but I have a right to my own opinion.

M. It would be happy for civil and religious societies, if people in general were less inclined to enlarge on matters of difference, and less disposed to magnify each other's errors and faults.

P. I believe that private interest, prejudice and passion do a great deal of mischief in church and state. How often people set up men, whom they know to be bad, and oppose others, whom they know to be good ! It is astonishing ! From the evil consequences of such conduct, good Lord deliver us !

M. It is our part to use our influence and endeavors to bring things into a more regular train. If we are real friends to society, we shall consult and promote its best interests. If we are real friends to religion, we shall discover our attachment to it, at home and abroad, and pay a sacred regard to family religion and public worship. I hope you will impress these things upon your own mind, and upon the minds of your children, as they become capable of receiving instruction.

P. It is my present purpose, and I hope I shall carry it into effect. I feel under great obligations to you, Sir, for your friendly and instructive remarks and explanations. It is my desire to live like a christian, and to bring up my family in the faith and order of the Gospel.

M. Before you go, I wish to be indulged in one observation, which deeply concerns you. Every one ought to be religious, and every religious parent should make haste and delay not to devote himself and his offspring to God in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten. When you shall have brought up your children in the best manner you are able, and shall have given them every advantage for improvement, shall you not think them very ungrateful, if they will not acknowledge *their* obligation and *your* kindness; and make some suitable returns for all your efforts of tenderness and energies of love? God has done infinitely more for us, than any earthly parent can do for his children. And shall we neglect to make some grateful acknowledgement and some suitable returns? How very ungrateful! Let us not, my friend, forget these things, but walk as children of the light, and may our children walk in the truth.



PART III.

ON THE

Institution, Design and Benefits

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

"Understandest thou what thou readeſt? And he ſaid, how can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me."

ON THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

THE obligation we are under to obſerve any religious inſtitution is founded upon the authority and injunctions of him who appoints it. When ſufficient evidence appears, that an inſtitution is appointed by one duly authorized to reveal God's will, and to direct the views and morals of men, we are under as ſtrong obligations to regard and obſerve it, as we are to obey any divine command whatever. Any ordinance, attended with proper testimonials of its divine authority, whether made known to us by a prophet, an angel, or the only begotten of the Father, claims our unfeigned reſpect and ſteady obſervance. Of this deſcription is the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which is the appointed memorial of the ſufferings and death

of Christ, and of the general purpose for which he died. It was instituted by Jesus himself, with the obvious design of promoting brotherly love, practical religion and true holiness. His commission and authority cannot be doubted by any, who receive him as a Teacher sent from God, and admit the general evidences of the Gospel.

The nature and design of this Ordinance may be collected from the words and actions of Jesus at the time of its institution, and from the testimony and observations of those persons, who were authorized and inspired to make known his mind and will. Of such a character were the Apostles and Evangelists, who were duly commissioned to open the treasures of the Gospel, and to declare the design of its rites and ordinances, and our obligations to observe them.

From a collective view of the passages, which contain the history of this excellent institution, it appears, that all our Saviour said and did, at the time of its first introduction, is included in what follows.

Our Lord, while celebrating the Jewish Passover with his disciples, called their attention to the offering he was about to make of himself for the remission of sins. He took and broke a piece of bread in their presence; and, after he had given thanks and blessed it, he made a friendly and affectionate distribution of it among them, accompanied with

these words : *Take, eat, this is my body broken or given for you ; this do in remembrance of me.* He then took a cup and gave it to them, saying, *drink of it all of you, for this is my blood of the New Covenant, shed for the remission of sins. This do, as often as ye drink of it, in remembrance of me.*

Taking into consideration all that took place at the institution of the Supper, it is evident, that Jesus commanded his disciples and followers to observe a practice of eating bread and drinking wine together in remembrance of him. He required them to eat of the bread which he then gave them, and to eat bread thus prepared, from that time forward, in memory of his counsels, sufferings and death. His language, when he gave them the cup, as clearly shews, that they were to continue the practice of grateful commemoration. *This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.* In the use of such elements, they were to eat of the bread, as a memorial of his body, broken or given for them ; and to drink of the wine, as a memorial of his blood, shed for them. These elements, jointly considered, are the appointed memorials of his death, suffered for the remission of sins.

The words and actions of Jesus, at the time this Ordinance was instituted, do not contain, nor imply, either a promise of any special reward to attend its observance, or a threat

of any special punishment for its omission. What was said and done carries no more than a plain and clear appointment and description of the Ordinance itself, and a positive and twofold command to celebrate it. And in this view, it may answer every moral and religious purpose for which it was intended.

The reasons and grounds of its institution were not peculiarly applicable to those who were then present, nor to any particular period of the christian church ; but obtain in all ages. And, as Jesus did not express any intimation, that the practice should be discontinued, and the reasons in favor of it always holding good, we may fairly conclude, that he designed it as a *standing Ordinance*, as a perpetual memorial of his sufferings and death, through all periods of his divine religion. To establish this point beyond all doubt, let it be remarked, that our Lord, when he appointed this Ordinance, was celebrating the Jewish Passover. While in judgment God smote the first born of every Egyptian family, he saw fit to *pass over* the houses of Israel, and in mercy to preserve them from the common calamity. The *Passover* was instituted in the Jewish law as a standing and perpetual memorial of the remarkable deliverance of the Jews from the fatal ravages of the destroying angel. Such being the occasion on which the *Lord's Supper* was instituted, and the *Paschal lamb* being of singu-

lar importance at that Jewish festival, it is manifest, that there is a perpetual obligation on christians to observe this Ordinance appointed by him, who is the *lamb* slain from the foundation of the world. And, as the Passover was kept and observed by every Jew, this Ordinance ought to be celebrated by every christian.

The benefits, which we may expect from a sincere and conscientious observance of it, are *that approbation* of God and of our kind Redeemer and of conscience, which an intentional compliance with the divine will must certainly *secure*, and *that additional strength* to the principles and habits of virtue and piety, which such a reasonable and affectionate celebration is adapted to produce. And, on the contrary, the evils we have to fear from our omission and neglect to celebrate it, are *that disapprobation* of God, and of the Redeemer, and of conscience, which a voluntary disobedience to the divine will has a direct tendency to produce, together with *the privation of that additional strength* of our moral principles and habits, which would result from a due celebration of it.

In recounting the benefits of this sacred Ordinance, we may also observe, that it excites those serious reflections and thankful acknowledgements, which the doctrines and life, the sufferings and death of Christ, are calculated to inspire ; and those pious reso-

lutions and purposes, which are the actuating principles of every worthy communicant. It tends to strengthen our attachment to religion, to cherish and enliven our desires of obedience, and to inspire the sentiments of christian piety and brotherly love. It calls into exercise those dispositions and affections, in the possession and display of which every good man would wish to live and die. In these ways it regards the principal objects and promotes the main design of the Gospel.

To pacify and encourage doubting christians, we should do well to consider, that whoever eats and drinks at the table of communion in designed remembrance of Christ, and with a prevailing desire to fulfil his commands, does truly and properly obey the command of Jesus in the institution. By reflecting on the goodness of God in laying the glorious scheme of redemption, and on the condescension and love of Christ, in carrying it into effect, together with our obligations to comply with the terms of the New Covenant, we conform to the spirit and design of this christian ordinance. No doubts and scruples ought, therefore, to keep any person from the table of our common Lord, if he have a prevailing inclination to cherish such reflexions and to fulfil such obligations. To such a person the language of the Gospel is, *come, for all things are now ready.*

The Ordinance of the Supper is well adapted to make good impressions upon our minds, and to cherish good dispositions and motives. It serves at the same time to prepare our hearts for those influences and graces, which are necessary to carry on the work of faith with power. To live, therefore, in the full belief of the Gospel, and yet forego the benefits of christian communion, is inconsistent. To live under a sense of Gospel grace, and yet neglect this christian Ordinance is a voluntary disobedience of a positive command. *And he who knoweth his Lord's will and prepareth not himself, shall be beaten with many stripes.* He is verily guilty. Why should not the sober inquirer, who has doubts and scruples resting upon his mind, dread the consequences of neglecting a command direct and positive, to which he is bound with a twofold cord, as well as dread the consequences of approaching the Lord's table in an improper and unworthy manner? Is it safe to neglect the duty of prayer, through fear that we shall not pray in faith? Shall we absent ourselves from the house and worship of God, lest we should not worship him in spirit and in truth? Through fear of any evils, shall we voluntarily expose ourselves to greater evils? From an apprehension that we may not do right, shall we do what we know to be wrong? Let reason and scripture answer.

We know that some have an idea, that the conditions of admission into the church are hard and arbitrary. Others may urge, that there is such a proportion of immoral men among professors, as to render it, in their opinion, inexpedient and sinful to join in communion. Difficulties of this kind but too frequently occur, and are matter of lamentation. But my brother's vices ought not to keep me from enjoying christian privileges, nor from obeying the commands of my Lord and Master. On the question of duty, persons should examine and proceed with the utmost caution. They must take heed, that they make an honest and faithful use of their faculties and advantages, in forming their opinions, and in making up the judgment upon which they act. For without diligent inquiry and research after truth, they may reject conditions, which are according to reason and scripture ; or may subscribe to articles of faith, which neither reason nor scripture warrants.

The institution being expressly designed to commemorate the greatest sufferings, the purest affection and the most signal benefits, the author feels it to be his duty to exhort and entreat every one to take the subject into serious consideration. Let those, who have never made public profession of christianity, faithfully inquire into the causes and consequences of their omission. Let none forget

the solemn and affecting words of Christ.
“ Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God ; but he, that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.”

With what propriety can we reckon ourselves among the followers of Jesus, while we neglect his positive injunctions, and refuse a share in that legacy of love, which he left to the church ? If we suffer our doubts to prevail and feel unwilling to wear the distinguishing marks and badges of a christian, how can we expect to enjoy the benefits of the Covenant, and become partakers of the heavenly inheritance ! Christ being the only true way to eternal life, the great Redeemer of men, how can we let the memory of his death ever die ! Our love to him and our regard to his institutions should keep alive the remembrance of his love to the world.

To impress and penetrate the minds of all, let us suppose the table of christian communion spread and furnished with proper elements, and our kind Redeemer at the head of it addressing his disciples and the multitude in this persuasive language : *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly of heart. My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Let not your hearts be troubled ; ye believe in God ; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions,*

and to encourage and guide you in preparing for them, I will send you the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who shall abide with you, that where I am ye may be also. You ought never to forget what I have done and suffered, and that you may not, eat of this bread and drink of this cup in remembrance of me. Since ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them. If ye love me and believe that the Father hath sent me, neglect not this my last request and injunction.

Thus does the Gospel present to us manifold inducements and motives, invitations and persuasives, to approach the table of our Lord. And Jesus himself fills our mouths with arguments to seek the blessings of the Gospel Covenant, and to live and walk as brethren. The conditions of divine acceptance being plain and reasonable, I felt unwilling that any should reject them. To improve our moral dispositions and to promote vital religion and social happiness enters into the design of the *Lord's Supper*. I lament that any persons of seriousness and piety should deprive themselves of its benefits. As Jesus, who appointed this Ordinance, placed all in a salvable state by his sufferings and death, and once offered himself for the sins of the world, it is devoutly to be wished, that all would believe with the heart unto righteousness, and that confession might be made with the mouth unto salvation. From the history of the primitive ages of christianity,

it appears, that the whole body of christians received the Lord's Supper, and that all who devoutly attended public worship joined in communion. Oh ! that such a practice, supported by a sense of duty, may soon obtain in this favored land, and bring all classes of people into one christian brotherhood !

To hasten the arrival of such a happy period, let us consider the qualifications of a worthy communicant, and earnestly strive to possess them. *A serious disposition of mind to regard the instructions of God's word, and an intentional obedience to the commands and institutions of Christ, are the grand requisites of a worthy celebration.* Nothing but a want of a serious and good intention can make the Ordinance of the Supper productive of any evil or danger. The *possession* of those principles, which are supposed ever to actuate a man of virtue, and a *desire* to commemorate the sufferings of Christ in accomplishing the adopted plan of redemption, have a commanding influence on the temper and practice, and form a valuable part of that moral vesture, which gains a welcome reception to him who wears it at the table of christian communion.

A sense of imperfection, frailty and sin, is no sufficient reason for denying ourselves christian privileges, but for availing ourselves of all the helps within reach. If our faith and hope are feeble, and our patience and firmness are deficient, we certainly require

something to strengthen our resolutions and to fortify our minds. We need something to purify and exalt our affections, and to penetrate and govern our hearts. To answer these important purposes the Ordinance of the Supper is well adapted, and the injunction of our Lord is always a reason for celebrating it. There is nothing in it which ought to excite any painful apprehension in the minds of the honest and sincere. We know it is written, "*He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*" On this passage, however, it is no more than fair to allow the Apostle the privilege of explaining himself. The great and alarming excesses of the Corinthian Church fully account for the expression, which the Apostle here uses. In the very next verse (1 Cor. xi. 30) he says, *For this cause, many among you are weak, and sickly, and many sleep, or die.* Bodily disorders and sickness and death were the frequent consequences of their wanton excesses and sinful indulgence. These various evils constitute that heavy judgment and just condemnation, which unworthy partakers ate and drank to themselves. The term, *unworthily*, signifies improperly, undeservedly, basely. They ate and drank without reference to the design of the Ordinance, and for the vile purposes of intemperance and excess. The word, *damnation*, in this place, means punishment, judg-

ment, vengeance. If instead of keeping in view the design of the institution, they ate at the table of gluttony, and drank the cup of intemperance, they must stand condemned at the bar of conscience, and in the sight of God and man. A want of decency in their behavior at the Lord's table, and a want of respect to the Ordinance, must lead on to unhappy consequences, and expose them to God's displeasure. But by the most impartial and critical inquiry, of which I am capable, into the true meaning and import of the passage, in connexion with the context, there is no particular reference to future punishment, nor to a state of exact retribution. It does not place the act of communion upon a different footing from any other religious act whatever. And some, who ate and drank unworthily, in the sense of the passage under consideration, became, no doubt, true penitents, and are now gone to inherit the promises. I am sensible, however, that our sin and guilt in neglecting a duty, recommended to our reason and understanding with singular force, urged by arguments peculiarly weighty and momentous, and attended with benefits of a superior nature, both in number and degree, are greatly aggravated. Excepting these circumstances of difference, religious acts are upon a similar footing; christian ordinances rest upon a similar foundation. Our acceptance in doing and observing them

depends on similar qualifications. Without a sincere regard to the authority of God and to the obligations of duty, we cannot reasonably hope for divine acceptance in any religious act or ordinance. But, when actuated by such a regard to God and duty, we do well, and shall be approved and accepted. This last observation, deeply impressed upon the mind, will greatly relieve and assist the doubtful and desponding christian, in reading and understanding such parts of the New Testament, as relate to the Ordinance of the Supper.

Many have been kept back from the Lord's table on account of the forbidding aspect of particular passages, which do not apply to the sober and sincere inquirer, but are directed to the profligate and abandoned. The minds of others have labored on the subject in consequence of misrepresentations of this Ordinance. And while we lament, that this excellent institution has been so much abused and perverted, we ought to rejoice with gratitude, that the scripture doctrine of it is so fully restored, and that there are such powerful arguments and so many precious opportunities to celebrate it.

What now remains to be said is in the way of improvement and application.

The unbounded love of the *Redeemer* of men should inspire love in the breasts of all the *redeemed*. The glorious work of our redemption by Jesus Christ deserves to be had

in everlasting remembrance. All, who enjoy the light of the Gospel and are capable of the service, ought to engage in the duty of grateful commemoration. The Ordinance of the Supper having a tendency to promote a spirit of piety and the practice of universal righteousness, young persons, as well as old, may derive from it peculiar advantage. And as the Israelite was directed to explain to his child the nature and design of the Jewish Passover, so ought the christian parent to explain to his offspring the nature and design of the Lord's Supper. He ought frequently to mention before his family the benevolent actions, the amiable character and atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

Under the manifold considerations which have employed our attention, let none, whether old or young, rich or poor, who have a desire to live a life of religion, refuse another invitation to the table of christian communion, which I now give them in the name of our common Lord and Master.

To conclude. May christian professors walk as children of light, that others may be persuaded to glorify our Father in heaven, and come with sincerity and gratitude to the commemorating feast of love. And may all be brought to the knowledge, profession and practice of the truth, as it is in Jesus, and be edified in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant. AMEN.

PART IV.
OF PRAYER,

*With a number of Forms of Family Prayer,
short and plain.*

THERE is a natural tendency in the soul of man to fly to some superior being for help in danger and distress; to exercise gratitude for sensible and substantial good, and unbosom itself, as occasions require, to an able and tried friend. So that the duty of prayer seems to be founded in our very nature. The acts of faith and love, adoration and praise, which result from a just view of the divine perfections, together with the sentiments and customs of all nations, plainly shew, that religious worship is conformable to the light of reason, and conducive to the moral improvement and happiness of man. Religion is the principal business of life, and prayer is a valuable part of religion. To render our sincere thanks and devout homage to God, and to give unto him the glory due unto his name, is our reasonable service, and is designed for our advantage. By prayer we draw near to God, lift up our souls to him, and spread our wants before him. It becomes us to address the infinite Majesty of

heaven from the closets of our hearts, in our families and in the sanctuary. But owing to the progress of vice, and the alarming decay of piety, love in many waxes cold, and the duty of prayer is surprisingly neglected. How many families live without offering morning and evening sacrifice to the common Parent and Friend of man ! While the ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, and while the feathered tribes, in their season, fail not to chant forth their morning and evening songs, how many families appear to live unmindful of the God who made them, and lightly esteem the rock of their salvation ! The author of this work, painfully sensible of the declining state of family religion, and feeling a tender concern for the welfare and happiness of parents and children, is led to speak from the fulness of his heart to heads of families, and to entreat them, if they have been deficient, no longer to neglect a duty so plain and important. To persuade them to this duty and to assist them in its performance, whole volumes have been written. Not long since, a Prayer Book for the use of families was prepared by the Association of Ministers in and about Portsmouth, in New-Hampshire. This book opens with a well adapted and affectionate address to heads of families on the subject, and administers gentle reproof to prayerless families, and gives them friendly and judicious counsel and advice. That

valuable work the author of this recommends to every family, as containing forms of devotion adapted to morning and evening, and to particular and extraordinary occasions, and as well calculated to answer the pious intention of that extensive and respectable Association. The object in preparing the following prayers for a family is to aid the same laudable design, of assisting the inquisitive, convincing the erroneous and establishing the just. He submits them to the consideration of families, and desires to devote this work to them and himself to God, with whom is the residue of the spirit. And he hopes that every one, who has the care of a family, will be led to resolve and express himself in the language of ancient piety—“*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*”

N. B. Any person, who feels a reluctance at taking the lead in family devotion, and especially one who has lately entered into a family state, may use the following forms of prayer, by reading them before his family for six months or a year; and, by thus reading them with serious attention, he will render the sentiments and language so familiar, as to go on with much propriety and with more feeling and devotion without such helps.

PRAYER I.

For the Morning of the Lord's Day.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father !
 Who art the Former of our bodies and Father of our spirits, and whose providence and tender mercies are over all thy works. Thy works, O God, praise Thee and thy saints bless Thee. For thine is the greatness, and the power, and the majesty, and Thou rulest and reignest over all. Lord, quicken us to call upon thy name, and enable us to approach Thee with reverence and godly fear. Wilt Thou, the Father of lights, enlighten our minds in the knowledge of the truth ; wilt Thou, the Father of mercies, have mercy on us guilty sinners, and inspire our hearts with love to Thee and to Jesus Christ the Son of thy love. As Thou art every where present, and knowest our dispositions and motives, our actions and characters ; as Thou knowest our down sitting and uprising, and understandest our thoughts afar off, may we humble ourselves before Thee, and offer this our morning sacrifice upon the altar of each of our hearts. May sin of every name and nature appear to us, as it really is, offensive to Thee and destructive of our best good. And may we hate and forsake every evil and false way. Help us to pay our principal regard to things of the highest value, and make every other consideration yield to that of duty.

Let the faith of the Son of God influence and regulate our lives and conversations, and may we secure the pleasures of a good conscience, the blessings of religion and the rewards of piety. O! that a sense of thy goodness and our dependence may attend and direct us through all the labors, concerns and cares of life and love.

We thank Thee for thy protection and bounty to the present time; for the instructions of thy word, the influences of thy spirit, and the hopes of happiness beyond the grave. Glory to God and the Redeemer, for the Gospel which brings life and immortality to light, and which assures us, that Thou art reconciling the world to thyself by Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man. O! that we may breathe the spirit of his religion, imitate his example and acquire the character of his true disciples. We thank Thee, that we are brought to this morning of thy day. May we be in the spirit on this the Lord's day, and worship Thee in spirit and in truth. May the Sabbath be our delight, and we discharge the duties of it with fervor and devotion. Be with all the worshipping assemblies of thy people. May ministers preach with the power and demonstration of the spirit, and may people attend with hearing ears and understanding hearts. Bless us of this family. Delight to dwell under this roof. Take possession of our hearts, and guide us

in the path of thy law. Bless our connexions and friends. Wilt Thou afford relief to the sorrowful, health to the sick, instruction to the ignorant, and thy parental care and blessing to all. Bless this town and the land which gave us birth, in all their important interests and concerns. Encircle in the arms of thine affection and mercy the whole family of man. Let thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth, as in heaven,, for the Redeemer's sake, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be praise forever and ever.

AMEN.



PRAYER II.

For Sabbath Evening.

O THOU great Parent and Friend of Mankind ! On whom all eyes wait, and to whom all flesh should come. May it please Thee to hearken to the voice of our supplication, for unto Thee will we direct our prayer and look up. As we are encouraged to speak unto Thee, wilt Thou hear in heaven, and, when Thou hearest, answer and forgive. And as we know not how to order our speech aright before Thee by reason of darkness and sin, grant us thine holy Spirit to help our infirmities, to indite our petitions, and to engage our hearts in thy service. Quicken us to call upon thy name, and animate our devotions. We beseech Thee, for the sake of

thy Son, to pardon our sins and have respect unto this our prayer. May we see the need we stand in of such a Saviour as Thou hast provided, and believe in him to the saving of our souls. In our addresses to thy throne, may we gratefully acknowledge thy favors, penitently confess our sins, and devoutly implore thy forgiveness and blessing. We thank Thee for domestic, social and religious favors; for Sabbaths and sanctuary privileges; for the day and means of grace and for the hopes of glory. May the preached word, to which we have this day attended, be followed with thy blessing, and be as good seed sown in good ground, and bring forth much fruit. Pardon the coldness and indifference with which we have performed the duties of public and social worship, and make us more fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. We rejoice with thankfulness in the possession and evidences of the Gospel; in the institutions it appoints, and in the hopes it inspires. In the temper of our minds and in the tenor of our conduct, may we conform to its rules and maxims, and let the lives we live in the flesh be by the faith of the Son of God. Wilt Thou work in us the work of faith with power, and shed abroad thy love in our hearts, that we may make the best improvement of our time and talents, and obtain the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. Let thy blessing rest upon us and thy grace

be sufficient for us, in all the conditions and circumstances of life. May this family belong to the household of faith, and be favored with every needed good. Wilt Thou accommodate thy mercies to the aged and the young, to the widow and the fatherless, to the sorrowful and afflicted, and to all whom we ought to bear on our hearts and tongues to thy throne. Grant, we beseech Thee, that pure religion may reign in the hearts and govern the lives of thy people in this town. May we know how good and pleasant it is for brethren, friends and neighbors to dwell together in unity and love, and endeavor to lessen the calamities and encrease the prosperity of each other. Wilt Thou bless Rulers and Citizens, Ministers and people, and let them fulfil their respective parts in all the cares and duties of life. Put an end to wars and fightings through the world, and let the peaceful reign of the Prince of peace soon arrive. These favors we ask, and these praises we offer in the Mediator's name, beseeching Thee to accept of us and of our desires to serve Thee, to take the charge of us this night and carry us to the light and prepare us for the duties of another day : For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever.

AMEN.

PRAYER III.

For the Morning.

SUPREMACY great and glorious Lord our God ! We adore and worship Thee as a Being, possessed of every perfection and attribute, which can render a character completely glorious and supremely happy, or claim the love and service of rational creatures. We now come into thy presence, believing that Thou art a God hearing prayer, and art the Rewarder of them, who diligently seek Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, we would now lift up our souls unto Thee, and offer this our morning sacrifice. We unitedly thank Thee for thy care and bounty, and for thy protection and grace. Having obtained help from God, we continue to the present time. We have been preserved another night and are brought to the light and enjoyments of this morning, because thy compassion and mercy fail not. Bless the Lord, O our souls and all that is within us, bless and praise his holy name. Encouraged by our past experience, we now commit ourselves to thy protecting providence. Guard us, this day, from every sin, assist us in every duty, and carry us to the close of it in health and peace. And in spending the whole day of life, may we display every christian grace and every amiable virtue. Sanctify to us all thy dealings, whether merciful or afflictive,

and work in us the work of faith with power. Bless all for whom we ought to pray. Let a sense of our own imperfections and faults lead us to exercise candour and charity towards others, and let a spirit of peace, truth and righteousness influence and govern all ranks of men. Overrule the affairs of church and state for the honor of thy name, for the prosperity of Zion, and for the peace and welfare of all classes of people through this our native land, and through the world. In the comprehensive language of our Lord, would we now sum up our desires and petitions to Thee, "Our Father, who art in heaven ; hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ; give us this day our daily bread ; forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ; for thine is the kingdom, power and glory forever." AMEN.



PRAYER IV.

For the Evening.

ALMIGHTY and most gracious God ! Who rulest in the kingdoms of nature, providence and grace, and art the great Giver and Lord of life. The heavens declare thy glory. Day unto day uttereth speech and one night speaks to another concerning thy truth and faithfulness ; and thy tender mercies are

over all thy works. Thou, Lord, wast the Protector of our infancy, the Guide of our childhood and youth, and hast been our Guardian and Friend to the present time. We acknowledge thy fatherly care, thy liberal bounty and thine abundant grace. We lament, that we have made no better returns for thy favors. May we have a prevailing sense of our past ingratitude and disobedience, and be led to that repentance which is unto life. May we carry with us a constant sense of our dependence and thy goodness, and endeavor to conform in heart and life to thy holy will. We thank Thee for all thou hast done for the recovery and happiness of a sinful world. Thou didst make known thy gracious intentions to our first parents, promising that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Thou didst speak to our fathers by the prophets, and Thou art now speaking to us and making overtures of mercy, by thy Son, Jesus Christ. O that we may receive the Saviour, whom Thou hast provided, in all his characters and offices, and draw our rules of conduct from his precepts and life. Let the same mind be in us which was also in him, and let the love of God and the Redeemer reign in our hearts.

Thanks to thy name, that we have been the charge of thy kind providence another day, and that we now appear before Thee in so much health and comfort. Wilt Thou

still be with us and grant us thy smiles. During the silent watches of this night, may it please Thee to watch over us for good. Give us refreshment by sleep, and awake us to the light and duties of another day. Prepare us for the events and changes of life, and help us to make a good improvement of all thy dispensations.

We commend to thy gracious notice all our absent friends, and the sons and daughters of sorrow and distress. May the ignorant receive instruction, the vicious be reclaimed, and the upright be encouraged. Wilt Thou succeed and prosper the means of useful knowledge and religious instruction, and may civil liberty and religious freedom be carried to all nations of the world. May thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and the glory and the praise shall be thine forever. AMEN.



PRAYER V.

For the Morning.

OUR Father who art in heaven ! Thine we are and Thee we ought to serve. We adore and worship Thee, the rightful Sovereign of the Universe, who art clothed with honor and with majesty and coverest thyself with light as with a garment. We revere that power by which the world was made. We admire that wisdom so manifest in the order

of nature, and in the course of providence. We adore and love that goodness, which extends to all thy creatures, and fills our hearts with food and gladness. While the heavens declare thy glory and all nature proclaims thy praise, the Gospel of Christ displays the riches of thy grace. We thank Thee for the light of life, for the light of reason, and for the light of revelation. Oh that we may spend our lives in thy fear and service, and walk in reason's light and in the path of thy law. Let thy Spirit and grace impress and penetrate our hearts and help us, at all times and in all conditions, to conduct as seeing Him, who is ever about our path, and knows our down sitting and uprising, and understands our thoughts. And may we carry a sense of thy presence and of our accountableness into all the labors and duties of life. We thank Thee for thy protection, care and bounty; for the blessings of friendship and society; for thy word and ordinances; and for all that variety of goodness, which renders our lives so comfortable and happy. We rejoice in the light of this morning, to which Thou hast safely brought us. Wilt Thou accept this our morning sacrifice, and grant us thy blessing. May we repent of our sins and forsake every evil and false way. This day wilt Thou preserve us from every evil and danger, and assist us in our lawful and laudable employments. Prepare us for

whatever is before us in life, and work in us the work of faith with power. Help us to acknowledge Thee in all our ways, and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Encircle in the arms of thy parental care our friends and connexions, and bless all for whom we ought to pray. Send comfort to the sorrowful, relief to the distressed, health to the sick, pardon to the penitent, and the Gospel to all mankind. Hear us in heaven, thy dwelling place, and when Thou hearest, answer and forgive, and the glory and praise shall be given to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, forever and ever.

AMEN.

PRAYER VI.

For the Evening.

INFINITELY great and glorious Lord our God! We would now employ the noblest powers and faculties of our souls to worship Thee, the greatest, the wisest and the best of Beings. Inspire us, we beseech Thee, with a true spirit of devotion, and may we call upon thy name with sincerity and uprightness of heart. As we now take it upon us to speak to Thee in the way of our duty, wilt Thou manifest thyself to us in the way of mercy and bless us. Open our minds to understand and our hearts to receive the truth, as it is in Jesus. Humble us under a sense of our sins,

and lead us to that repentance which is unto life. As Thou art the Lord God gracious and merciful, have mercy on us guilty sinners. Enable us to live in the character of thy children, and to be faithful in all the relations and duties of life. May we be established in that faith which works by love and displays itself in ways of obedience. Let nothing draw us into sin, nor keep us from duty. May our hearts ever glow with piety to Thee, and in our intercourse with the world may we be just and kind, treating others as we could reasonably expect to be treated ourselves. With regard to ourselves, may we be sober, temperate and prudent. In our lawful employments grant us thy smiles and blessing, and through the whole day of life wilt Thou guide and direct us. May it please Thee to bless all our absent friends and family connexions, and all whom we ought to mention in our addresses. May a spirit of order, truth and piety pervade all ranks of men in this our favored land. Give wisdom to our Rulers, energy to our laws, and permanency to our government. Prosper the means of useful knowledge and religious instruction, and let wisdom, and knowledge and virtue be the stability of our times. We now commend to thy gracious patronage and blessing all our brethren of the human race. Cause the thunders of war to cease, and let all men become subjects of that glorious

kingdom, which consists in righteousness and peace. We would not, heavenly Father, close the devotions of the evening without thanking Thee for thy care over us the past day, and imploring thy protection this night. Wilt Thou give us quiet repose and awake us to the light and duties of another day, for the Redeemer's sake, to whom with the Father and holy Spirit be praise forever. AMEN.

O

PRAYER VII.

For the Morning.

O THOU God of the morning and the evening, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike. We now come before Thee to express our firm belief in Thee and also in Christ ; our gratitude for thy favors ; our submission to thine authority and allotments ; our full purpose of heart to live soberly, righteously and piously. And wilt Thou incline us to conduct according to these our resolutions, and to walk in the path of thy law. We desire now to call into exercise the noblest powers and best affections in worshipping and serving Thee, the greatest and best of Beings. The heavens declare thy glory, and the whole universe is open to thine inspection and subject to thy control. What then is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the sinful children of men, that Thou shouldst daily visit them with thy grace and

favor ! Thy loving kindness is new to us every morning, and thy truth and faithfulness every night. May we carry a sense of thy providential care and active goodness, and of our dependence and obligation, through all the labors and duties of this and every day. In our common concerns and regular business, may we enjoy thy smiles and blessing, and be satisfied with thine allotments. Establish thy covenant with this family and may we belong to the household of faith. In our domestic relations and duties may we be faithful and happy. Let this our dwelling be the mansion of peace and love. We commend to thy gracious notice all, who are near and dear to us. We pray for the sick and sorrowful, the poor and needy, the widow and fatherless, the aged and young. Wilt Thou accommodate thy mercies to their various circumstances and wants. Bless all ranks of men, and all denominations of christians. Let our Rulers be wise and faithful, and citizens honest and virtuous ; our religious Teachers speak with the power and majesty of divine truth, and people attend to the preached word with hearing ears and understanding hearts. May our national government be a lasting source of rich blessings to all classes of people, and may we cultivate that righteousness and those virtues, which exalt and dignify a national character. Give thy son the heathen for his inheritance, and

the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and let the great family of mankind worship and yield submission to the Prince of peace.

We offer this our morning sacrifice in the name of our Mediator and Advocate, through whom to Thee be rendered ceaseless praises.

AMEN.

PRAYER VIII.

For the Evening.

O THOU, who art the God of our lives and Father of all our mercies! In the morning shalt Thou hear our voice, and in the evening will we declare thy truth and faithfulness. As Thou art every where present and every where good, Oh that thy dread may fall on us, and a sense of thy goodness inspire us with hope and confidence in Thee. Having obtained help from Thee, we still continue, and are indulged with another opportunity of family worship. For thy care and protection, for thy word and ordinances, and for all the blessings of the throne and of the footstool, we desire to return Thee our sincere thanks. We now call to mind with gratitude the favors of the past day and this evening, and we beseech Thee to give thine angels charge of us this night. And do Thou be pleased to wake us to the light and duties of the following day. O that we may be hum-

ble and penitent on account of our sins, and with a broken and contrite heart approach the throne of grace ! We lament before Thee, that we have made no better improvement of our time and advantages, and that we have made no better returns for thy favors. O that our eyes may be opened, that we may see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and that we may behold the beauties of holiness. May we be renewed in the temper and spirit of our minds, and be inclined to keep thy law. May religion, pure and undefiled, appear important, and the Saviour precious. With our whole hearts may we love and serve Thee. Guide, we pray Thee, our future steps. Guard us from the temptations and snares of sin. Satisfy us with life, and prepare us for an exchange of worlds.

O Thou Observer and Preserver of men ! Wilt thou grant, that all thy rational offspring here below may soon enjoy the sweets of liberty, and the blessings of the Gospel. Let the sun of righteousness scatter the clouds of ignorance, error and superstition, and enlighten the minds and warm the hearts of the whole family of man. With confidence in thy benignity and love, we implore thy blessing on our native land, and on all our important interests and concerns. May thy protecting providence guard us from foreign invasions and domestic evils, and we be that happy people, whose God is the Lord. Let the

Gospel have a commanding influence over the temper and practice of all ranks of citizens, and wisdom and knowledge be the stability of our times. These things we ask and offer in the Mediator's name, to whom with the Father and the holy Spirit be rendered unceasing praises. AMEN.



SOME OCCASIONAL ADDRESSES,
*Which may be introduced, at discretion, into the
preceding Forms of prayer.*

I.

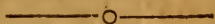
On a Thanksgiving Day.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting Father ! In whom power resides, in whom wisdom dwells, and from whom goodness flows ! Thou openest thine hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. The whole creation is thy charge and thy tender mercies are over all thy works. We thank Thee that Thou hast brought us to see this Anniversary under circumstances of so much comfort and happiness. With gratitude would we utter the memory of thy goodness and speak of thy loving kindness. By a sacred regard to thy wise dispensations and by a course of virtue and piety, may we express to Thee our thankfulness for our privileges and blessings. And let a sense of thy bounty and grace to us inspire us with kindness and charity to all around.

II.

For Fast Day.

O LORD God gracious and merciful ! With reverence and godly fear would we now humble ourselves before Thee. We have sinned, what shall we answer, O Thou Observer and Preserver of men ! At the recollection of our numerous faults and by the recommendation of our civil Fathers, we now lay aside the common labors and concerns of life, that our sins may be set in order before us, and that we may take to ourselves the words and feelings of penitence and fly to Thee, with whom there is forgiveness and plenteous redemption. Help us to keep such a Fast as Thou hast chosen, and may we offer Thee the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts. We pray God to smile on and protect the liberties and important interests of our country, and to order the seasons of the year favorably. May Schools and Academies, Colleges and Universities flourish under thy gracious patronage, that wisdom and knowledge may be the stability of our times.



III.

In a Time of Sicknefs.

THOU, O Lord, art the great Physician of soul and body. Thou healest our diseases, redeemest our lives from destruction, and crownest us with loving kindness and tender mercy. Our help is in Thee. Restrain, we

beseech Thee, the progress of the malady, which prevails among us, and let the lives and health of thy people be precious in thy sight.



IV.

In Time of Drought.

O THOU Father of the rain, who begettest the drops of the dew, be pleased to visit and water thy weary heritage. Cause the grass to grow for cattle and the various fruits for the service of man, and crown the year with thy goodness.



V.

For the President of the United States and all in our national Administration.

WILT Thou, who rulest and reignest over all, take into thy holy keeping thine illustrious Servant, the *President* of the United States. May his important life be precious in thy sight, and be spent in the service of his country. O that he may be an extensive blessing to our land. And may all, who take an active part in the administration of our national government, be guided by the best principles and motives, and be led by wisdom into those measures, which may do honor to themselves, and promote the prosperity of their country. And let thy providence be as a wall of fire round about us, and the Gospel of Christ a glory in the midst of us.

VI.

For the Blessings of Liberty through the world.

O THOU universal Parent ! Let the branches of the tree of liberty extend from shore to shore, and from the river to the ends of the earth, that all nations may taste and enjoy its fruits.



VII.

For our State Government.

BLESS our Governor, and grant him wisdom to direct our public affairs with a skilful hand and an upright heart. And may all in subordinate stations of important trust, be wise men, ruling and walking in the fear of the Lord. Let Officers of State and Ministers of the Gospel be alike patrons of liberty, learning and religion, and be eminently the Ministers of God for good to the people.



PART V.

ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT,

AND

THE DUTIES OF CITIZENS.

BY

Question and Answer.

" 'Tis Education forms the tender mind ;
" Just as the *twig* is bent, the *tree's* inclin'd."

A certain person proposed to Agesilaus, a Spartan king, this question : *In what ought Youth to be principally instructed ?* Agesilaus wisely answered, *That which they will have most need to practise, when they are men.*



1. Question. *WHAT is Civil Government ?*

Answer. Civil Government is an establishment of legal authority and the administration of public affairs, according to original articles of mutual agreement, which teach rulers how to govern and subjects how to obey.

2. Q. *Are all men born free and equal ?*

A. Though men possess a diversity of talents and advantages, they are born equally free with regard to rights, obligations and duties.

3. Q. *What is the end of Civil Government ?*

A. Civil Government is designed to protect and encourage men in their honest and laudable pursuits ; to promote a fair and useful intercourse with each other, and to secure the safe enjoyment of their lives, liberties and property.

4. Q. *What kinds of Government are there in the world ?*

A. There are three general forms, which are, however, differently modified.

5. Q. *What are they called ?*

A. *Monarchy*, where the sovereign power is lodged in *one person* ; *Aristocracy*, where the supreme power is holden by *a few individuals* ; and *Democracy*, where the supreme power remains in *the people*.

6. Q. *Is there any other governmental distinction usually made ?*

A. Government is farther distinguished into free and arbitrary.

7. Q. *May not this distinction so far be lost, that governments denominated FREE may exercise ARBITRARY power ?*

A. When a people, or their constituted agents, under a *free* government, are guided by their passions and prejudices, instead of constitutional principles and the spirit of the laws ; when they wantonly and materially change the instruments and measures of rightful administration, the government becomes unstable and *arbitrary*.

8. Q. *Is the Government of the United States in any danger from such a source ?*

A. The love of liberty is so interwoven with the ligaments of our hearts and we breathe so much of the spirit of our fathers, that if we be as jealous of our passions and vices, as we are of our Rulers and laws, the grand palladium of American liberty will be happily preserved. "*The sons of Columbia will never be slaves.*"

9. Q. *What is a Republic ?*

A. A Republic is a regular and organized Democracy, where the people invest whom they please, with Legislative, Executive and Judicial authority, and reserve a right to call them to an account.

10. Q. *What then is the difference between a Democracy and a Republic.*

A. A Democracy supposes that the supreme power resides in the people ; but a *Republic* supposes the supreme power to be, for a time, delegated to particular persons.

11. Q. *Can you name some of the principal advantages of a Republican Government ?*

A. In a Republican Government, elections are free and frequent ; the doors of preferment are open to the most regular and deserving Citizens ; and, if the people duly exercise their rights, the wisdom of the Community may be collected and applied to the best purposes.

12. Q. *Does the Gospel encourage and patronize civil Government ?*

A. Such was the state of the Jews in our Saviour's time, that He did not say much about patriotism, or the love of our country.

13. Q. *What was our Saviour's conduct with regard to the rulers and laws of His country ?*

A. He paid respect and yielded obedience to both.

14. Q. *What was His probable meaning, when he said, "Render to Cæsar the things, which are Cæsar's, and to God the things, which are God's." ?*

A. He meant, no doubt, that men should be ready to support civil society and maintain religion.

15. Q. *Why did Christ adopt an uncommon method, to pay Peter's tribute, or taxes, and His own.*

A. This method was taken to shew, in a striking manner, His readiness to submit to lawful authority.

16. Q. *And what is said of civil Government by Christ's Apostles ?*

A. They exhort men to be subject unto higher powers, and to give tribute and honor to whom tribute and honor are due ; and they enjoin us to submit to every regular ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

17. Q. *What are the reasons and grounds for maintaining social order and civil society ?*

A. The social nature of man and the revealed will of God.

18. Q. *How does it appear, that civil society, in its improved state, is agreeable to the nature of man and to the will of God ?*

A. Civil society gives a more liberal play to our social affections, which God requires us to exercise, and which conduce to enjoyment and usefulness ; and, as civil society improves, human happiness always increases.

19. Q. *What, then, will be the state of the world, when civil society shall be carried to the greatest possible perfection ?*

A. Then civil Government will be founded upon christian principles ; mankind will display the true spirit of the Gospel, and universal peace and happiness will reign triumphant.

20. Q. *What is civil liberty ?*

A. Civil liberty is the right or power, which each citizen derives from the community, to regulate his own conduct in all civil matters.

21. Q. *What is political liberty ?*

A. Political liberty is the legal right, which citizens enjoy by common consent, to manage the affairs of the community to which they belong.

22. Q. *In what ways may political liberty be abused ?*

A. By neglecting matters of common concern, by an heedless election of unquali-

fied persons into public offices, and by wantonly attempting to exercise powers already delegated to others.

23. Q. *What is religious liberty ?*

A. It is a liberty to worship and serve God according to the dictates of a clear conscience, and to perform christian duties without molestation.

24. Q. *And what is moral liberty ?*

A. Moral liberty, for which we are more especially indebted to our Maker, is a liberty of acting well or ill, wisely or foolishly.

25. Q. *Where are these kinds of liberty the most fully enjoyed ?*

A. Every man in every nation enjoys moral liberty ; the other kinds are, at present, the most fully enjoyed in the United States of America.

26. Q. *And by what means may these liberties be preserved ?*

A. We may preserve these liberties, by studying the things, which make for peace ; by carefully exercising our civil rights ; and by bringing into practice the principles of our holy religion.

27. Q. *Favored with such an excellent Government and with such ennobling liberties, what is our duty ?*

A. It is our duty to act the part of honest men, good citizens, and real christians, that we may become inhabitants of the new Jerusalem.



A part of DEAN SWIFT'S SERMON on sleeping at Church, with some alterations.

ACTS xx. 9.

“And there sat in a window a certain young man, named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and while Paul was long preaching he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.”

I HAVE chosen these words with design, if possible, to disturb some in this assembly of half an hour's sleep, for which places of public worship are, at the present day, very much celebrated. It so happens, that those, who by the wickedness of their lives, stand in the greatest need of instruction, have usually the smallest share. For they are either absent on account of idleness, or dislike to religion, or with a view to doze away the intemperance of the week; or else, if they come, they employ their minds upon subjects quite foreign to the business of the place.

The accident, which happened to the young man in our text, has not been sufficient to discourage his successors. But, unwilling to risk the consequences of a fall, they choose some safer place. For, though some preachers may exceed St. Paul in the art of setting

men to sleep, they cannot, like him, work miracles to wake them up again. Of course, modern sleepers take the most safe and convenient stations and postures for their repose. They are willing to venture the consequences of sleeping at church during the exercise, but are loath to run the hazard of a fall. However, as this is not the only way in which men discover their neglect of preaching, I shall enlarge on the subject, and order my discourse in the following method.

I. I shall produce several instances to shew the great neglect of preaching.

II. I shall reckon up some of the objections and prejudices, which men have against preaching.

III. I shall set forth the great evils of this neglect of the preached word, and discover the real causes of it.

IV. I shall propose some remedies against these great and spreading evils.

I. I shall produce several instances to shew the great neglect of preaching.

These may be reckoned under two heads. First, men's absence from the sanctuary; and, secondly, their misbehaviour when they are there.

The first instance of men's neglect is their frequent absence from the place of worship. The consciences of many men have by some means become extremely pliant and submissive to their owners. They appear to be

weary of *pressing home* their counsels and admonitions, and determined to make no farther disturbance. Accordingly any thing, however trivial, will be sufficient to excuse frequent absence from public worship. Some men are so unfortunate as to be always indisposed on the Lord's day, and think nothing more unwholesome than the air of a church. Others have their affairs so oddly contrived, as to be unluckily prevented by business. Some discover strange fits of laziness, which seize them at the close of the week, and are certain to confine them at home on the sabbath. Others, again, are absent out of contempt to religion. And, lastly, there are not a few, who, calling the sabbath a day of rest, claim the privilege of their castle, and spend the day in eating, drinking and sleeping. Now, in all this, the worst circumstance is, that these very persons stand in the greatest need of help. These various disorders call loudly for a physician.

Secondly, Men's neglect of preaching appears in their misbehavior when they attend public worship. Were the whole assembly to be divided into different classes, according to their deportment, how small would be the number of those, who receive the word as they ought ! What a large proportion of the seed, then sown, would appear to have fallen by the way side, upon stony ground, or among thorns ! How small a portion of good

ground there would be to receive it ! Of all misbehavior in the house of God, none appears greater, than that of those, who sleep away their time. Opium is not more stupifying to many persons, than an afternoon sermon. The words of any preacher become a sort of uniform sound at a distance, which always lulls the senses. And when the sound ceases, they awake from their slumbers, call their senses together, and are ready, with much devotion, to receive the blessing.

I proceed,

II. To reckon up some of the usual prejudices and objections which men have against preaching, and to shew the unreasonableness of them.

The indecent conduct of many, while in solemn assembly and while their duty is explained to the audience for the benefit of all, obliges them to search for excuses to extenuate their fault. And without long trying the strength of their inventive faculties, they are disposed to shift the blame upon the particular preacher, or upon preaching in general.

First. They object against the preacher. His manner, his delivery, his voice, is disagreeable. His style and expressions are much too flat and low, or much too high and bombastic. His matter is heavy or trivial ; or on the other side, he runs up into unintelligible speculations, empty notions, and giddy flights.

Secondly. They object against preaching in general. It is a perfect road of talk. They already know whatever can be said, and have heard it an hundred times over. They complain, that preachers do not enliven such an old beaten subject with wit and invention. These and the like objections are frequently in the mouths of those men, who neglect the preached word. But let us inquire whether these objections be reasonable.

The doctrine delivered by preachers may be nearly the same. *So we preach, and so you believe.* But the manner of writing and delivering is according to the abilities and skill of preachers, who differ from one another in these respects, as much as any other class of men. But, however, in personal dislikes, are these men certain that they are always right? Do they duly consider that every public assembly is made up of various characters, whose taste and judgment differ? Do they consider, that they not only differ from others, but from themselves at different times? For these reasons, to calculate a discourse that shall exactly suit them all, is beyond the reach of human reason; knowledge and invention. Besides, if preaching in general be old and beaten, and they be well acquainted with it, the more shame and guilt fall to them, who have derived so little benefit from it. And what could these persons say in their defence, should we turn the objection upon

themselves? With all their liberty of discourse on various subjects, they are so dull and destitute of invention, as to furnish nothing but tedious repetitions, and little paltry common place observations. And these are so vulgar, obvious and worn out, that were they advanced in support of any good cause, they would be hooted off the stage.

Nor, lastly, are preachers justly blamed for neglecting the airs and flourishes of theatrical performers. It is not the business of a Christian Orator so much to move the *passions* of his hearers, as to enlighten and convince their *understandings*, not so much to *entertain* as to *persuade* them. *St. Paul came not with excellency of words, or enticing speech of men's wisdom, but in plain evidence of the spirit.* And, perhaps, it was for that reason, the young man, Eutychus, accustomed to Grecian eloquence, grew tired and fell so fast asleep.

I go on,

III. To set forth the great evils, which attend such neglect of preaching, and to discover its real causes.

It is obvious, that this neglect of preaching has occasioned the decay of religion among us. What a diversity of sentiments obtains at the present day? What a multitude of sectaries stand forth, and some with impudence, and others with abundant weakness, endeavor to vindicate their respective tenets? And how many are there, who, having no other

ground of hope, try to persuade themselves and others (an herculean task) that all are safe and that the kingdom of God, like Peter's net, will take in good and bad ? But the various and promiscuous multitude, which Peter saw, were exhibited to teach him, that the *offers* of salvation would be *made* to all *nations* and *descriptions* of men. This manifold exhibition was not designed to point out the future condition of all characters, but to denote the charter of privileges secured by Christ to all the human race. Some persons, however, so twist and distort the scriptures, as to press them into the service of sin and satan. Such men, by indulging false sentiments, may soon forget that they are false, and at length they may conclude, that the Almighty is determined to ransack the dark regions of impenitence and even the infernal abodes, till every created being, whether man, brute, or devil, is brought within the confines of paradise. Such wild notions may be generally owing to men's ignorance, ignorance to the neglect of preaching, and the neglect of preaching to a corrupt heart ; and, though they attribute this corruption of heart to satanic influence, the guilt and pains are charged to them, and they will be brought to an account.

Again. This great neglect of preaching opens a way to all manner of vice. For, in vain we preach down sin to people, *whose*

hearts are waxed gross, whose ears are dull of hearing, whose eyes are closed. Of all kinds of neglect of God's preached word, sleeping in the house of public worship denotes the greatest. It is like sleeping upon the brink of a precipice, where the least blast might prove fatal. A scorner may listen to reason and become serious; an unbeliever may feel the pangs of a guilty conscience, and become a convert; one, whose eyes are rolling from object to object, may by a lucky word be called to attention; but a sleeper shuts up all the avenues to the soul. He is like *the adder, that hearkeneth not to the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely.* And we may preach with as good success to the congregation of the dead.

But the great evils of such neglect will more fully appear, if we consider the causes from which it proceeds.

The first of these causes is an evil conscience. Many men come to the sanctuary to save, or gain a reputation. Or they come for the sake of complying with an established custom. But all this time, they are loaded with the guilt of deep rooted sins. They expect to hear nothing from the pulpit, but terrors and threatenings, their sins painted in their true colours, and that eternal misery, if they remain impenitent, must be their portion. To prevent the alarms of such a just description, they stop their ears and divert their thoughts, and seek any amusement, rather than to

meditate on their own frightful condition.

Another cause of this neglect is a heart set upon worldly things. Men, whose minds are much enslaved to wordly affairs through the week, cannot disengage or break the chain of their thoughts so suddenly, as to apply to a discourse, which is wholly foreign to what they have most at heart. Tell an usurer of charity and mercy and restitution, and you talk to the deaf; his heart and soul, with all his senses, are among his bags, or he is gravely asleep and dreaming of a mortgage. Tell a man of business, that the cares of the world are apt to choak the good seed; that we should not incumber ourselves with much serving; and that the salvation of the soul is the *one thing needful*. You see, it is true, the shape of a man before you, but his faculties are gone off among his papers of account and plans of profit. He is thinking how to support a bad cause, or pick flaws in a good one; or else he wears out the time in drowsy nods.

A third cause of the great neglect of preaching arises from the practice of some men, who endeavor to wound and destroy religion. Being strangers to the virtues, which it inculcates, they know nothing of its pleasures, and therefore wish to effect its overthrow. And these but too well succeed. For they always have at hand a volley of buffoonery, which they fire off on all occasions; and, as their

pieces will not allow them to make a long shot, they fire the oftener at smaller distances.

IV. Let me now, in the last place, briefly offer some remedies against these palpable evils.

One remedy against the neglect of preaching is rightly to consider the end for which it was designed. Those who attend public worship merely to be entertained are often disappointed. Our business at church is quite another thing. We should go either to learn or be reminded of our duty to God, to ourselves or to each other ; to apply the doctrines delivered, compare the rules we hear with our lives and actions, and find wherein we have transgressed. These are the dispositions, which men should bring with them into the house of God. And, if they attend with such views, they do not wish the preacher to display great wit and eloquence, but to exhibit the truth in all its simple majesty. They do not employ their ingenuity to find out his infirmities and faults, but aim to correct their own.

Lastly, The scorers of preaching would do well to consider, that their talent at ridicule is very easily acquired and applied to any other subject. Religion is no less excellent, because it is capable of being perverted to burlesque. The most celebrated pieces have been treated in the same manner with some success. It is in any man's power to suppose a fool's cap upon the wisest head, and then laugh at his own supposition.

To conclude. These considerations may have some effect while men are awake ; but what arguments shall we use to the sleeper ? What methods shall we take to hold open his eyes ? Those, who indulge such drowsy powers, can listen for hours to hear idle talkers revile religion, but are unwilling to watch half an hour, to hear it defended. Is this the part of a good judge, to listen on one side of the cause, and sleep on the other ? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, and God give us all grace to hear and receive his holy word to the salvation of our souls.

AMEN.



The LORD's PRAYER, Paraphrased.

AS a legacy of regard and affection to a sinful world, our blessed Saviour left a summary of his religion to guide our faith and to influence our practice. That form of devotion, which He prescribed to us, and which is called *The Lord's Prayer*, teaches us to cultivate the dispositions of reverence and submission, mutual forgiveness, extensive benevolence and unfeigned piety. It clearly denotes the importance of sincerity and devotion in our religious addresses, and the necessity of conforming in heart and life to this excellent form of supplication. It is plain and rational, concise and devout. Had the

name of the real Author been concealed from the world, every observing and good man would be likely to discern and admire the bursting vein of piety, which runs through the whole of it. This may more fully appear, if we now consider and explain the several passages and petitions, which it contains. And it becomes us all to come before the Lord with a filial temper and say in the words of our Saviour,

“ Our Father, who art in Heaven.”

By this mode of expression, we acknowledge God to be the author of our lives, our hopes and our happiness. We consider ourselves as the creatures of his power, the pensioners of his bounty and the subjects of his government.

And when we cherish these pious sentiments and pay homage to our Father in Heaven, with proper temper and disposition, it is our heart's desire and our earnest prayer, that His great name may be revered and magnified by all intelligent creatures, and that all may join us in offering incense to God, holy and acceptable. Our minds dwell on the next expression of reverence and adoration,

“ Hallowed be thy name.”

And that all may unite in the sincere and devout worship of God, whose name is sanctified by them who come nigh Him, we are desirous to see God's moral kingdom erected upon the ruins of satan's empire, and to have

all become the willing and obedient subjects of the Prince of peace. We devoutly wish, that all hearts may yield to the power and energies of divine truth. And in this language of piety, we pray to the Parent and Lord of all,

“ Thy kingdom come.”

And while we cultivate submission to God and commit all we have and wish for to his care and keeping, it should be our earnest desire, that a spirit of religion may pervade all ranks of men and all nations of the earth, and that all mankind may become subject to the glorious empire of reason and religion. The language of our hearts should be,

“ Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” May thy will be the law and thy good pleasure the delight of man.

Those, who thus pour out their hearts before our Father in Heaven, reverence his great name, and cordially desire that his just dominion may be acknowledged in every land and by every tongue, do not indulge any anxious solicitude about the things of this life ; but, in the diligent use of the appointed means of support and comfort, they commit all to Him, whose eye surveys, and whose goodness feeds his creatures ; and they are ready to join in the next petition,

“ Give us this day our daily bread.” Grant us the fruits of honest industry, and give us as many of the good things of life as are best

for us ; especially, afford us a supply of that bread, which came down from Heaven, and the guidance of that spirit, which comforts and animates.

Conscious of our unworthiness and sin, we ought to humble ourselves before God, and implore his pardoning mercy. And if we cultivate the feelings of penitence on account of our transgressions, and ask forgiveness, we are willing on reasonable terms to forgive those who offend us. We are ready to shew to others that mercy, which we ourselves pray for and really need. And, having on easy conditions buried our resentments and cultivated a mild and forgiving temper, we may with confidence adopt the language, which our Saviour recommends,

“ Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” As we forgive may we be forgiven. As we forgive those who wilfully injure us, when we discover in them marks of sorrow, so in the exercise of repentance may we experience Thy forgiving grace.

The trials, which we are called in Providence to suffer, we should endure with patience ; but when we consider the treachery of the human heart and the allurements of the world, we dread the favorite abodes of temptation. We must be sensible of our exposedness to sin, and of the necessity of vigilance. All, who are conscious of their own weakness, and see the dangers which en-

compass human life, feel the propriety and force of our Saviour's words,

“ *Lead us not into temptation.*” Lay nothing before us which will allure us into sin. Shew us no sinful indulgence. Be our present Helper in trouble. Let not the storms of affliction overcome us ; but do Thou guard and protect us, and, when evils oppress and calamities invade us, *do thou assist and deliver us.* Rescue us from evil, or support us under it.

Such aid and help the children of God often impore, while they patiently endure what he sees fit to appoint. It does not become us to decline any dangers, or sufferings, designed for the trial of our faith, or the improvement of our virtue ; but we should studiously avoid the haunts of sin, and carefully shun the paths of iniquity. And we should ask wisdom of God, who knows our weakness and sorrows, and can stretch forth his hand and support us. Unto Thee, O Lord, will we, therefore, direct our prayer and look up. Wilt thou grant us what is good, though we do not ask for it, and deny what would be injurious, though in ignorance we should pray for it. And we beseech Thee to teach us what is good, *teach us Thyself*, and may our desires and hearts aspire to Thee ; for *Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.*

AMEN.





~~Address~~

Mass Fisher



